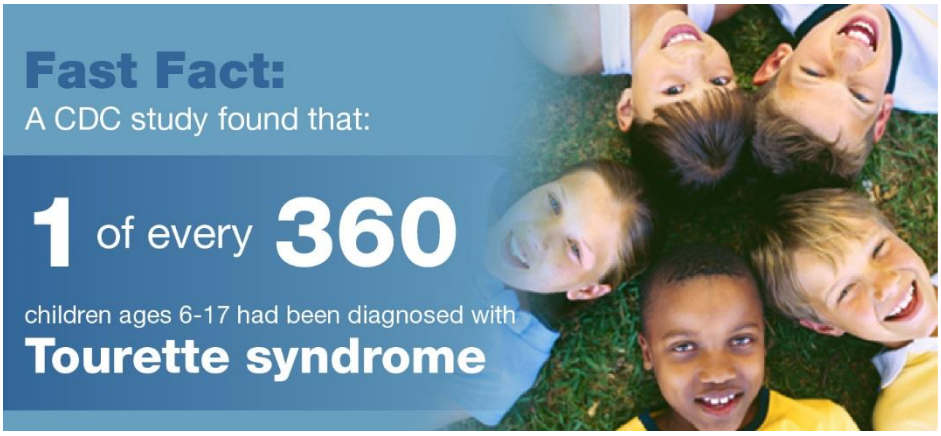
At a Glance: Tourette Syndrome

CDC is committed to:

- Increasing our understand of Tourette syndrome,
- Educating communities, families, educators and providers about TS,
- And helping improve the lives of people with TS.



What is TS?

TS is a disorder of the nervous system that causes people to have "tics."

Tics are sudden twitches, movements, or sounds that people do repeatedly. People who have tics cannot stop their body from doing these things.

People with TS have two forms of tics:

- **Motor tics**, involving movements of the body, like blinking.
- **Vocal tics**, involving sounds made with the voice, like grunting.

Tics are common, but for people to be diagnosed with TS, tics have to occur many times a day, nearly every day, for at least a year. Symptoms usually begin when a child is 5 to 10 years old.

TS can impact how children do in school, their relationships, and their health.

The media often portray people with TS as shouting out swear words or repeating the words of other people. These symptoms are rare and they are not required for a diagnosis of TS.

How many people have TS?

The exact number of people with TS is unknown. National data from 2011-2012 estimated that 1 of every 360 U.S. children (about 138,000) ages 6 to 17 had been diagnosed with TS. The estimates from smaller, more detailed studies are often higher, so it likely means that there are many people who have TS, but have not been diagnosed. TS is more common among boys than girls.

What conditions also occur in people with TS?

More than 4 of 5 children with TS have at least one additional mental, behavioral, or developmental condition.

The two most common conditions are:

- Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD; occurs in 50% to 70% of children with TS).
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (occurs in 30% to 50% of children with TS).

People with TS are also more likely to have depression, anxiety, and/or learning disabilities.

How is TS treated?

Although there is no cure for TS, there are treatments to help manage the tics caused by TS. Many people with TS have tics that do not get in the way of living their daily lives and therefore, do not need any treatment. Medication and behavioral treatments are available if tics cause pain or injury; interfere with school, work, or one's social life; or cause stress. A promising new behavioral treatment is the Comprehensive Behavioral Intervention for Tics (CBIT).

Management of TS should include timely and accurate diagnosis, education, and behavioral or medication treatment, if needed. Related conditions must be considered and they also might require treatment.

CDC in Action

CDC is:

- Partnering with the Tourette Association of America to provide health education and training to physicians, nurses, social workers, educators, and the public about TS, its related disorders, and treatment including CBIT.
- Funding four sites as part of the Project to Learn about Youth Mental Health, a community study looking at how frequently certain mental, behavioral, emotional, and tic disorders occur in school-aged children and how those disorders are treated.
- Funding the development of a screening tool to improve the early identification of children with tics.
- Funding an update of the Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children to use as an accurate diagnostic interview for mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders including TS.
- Actively monitoring how common TS is, using nationally representative data from the 2007 and 2011 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH), as well as its impact on health care, parenting, and education.
- Leading research to better understand symptom onset, diagnostic process and timing, and treatment of TS using data from the National Survey of the Diagnosis and Treatment of ADHD and Tourette Syndrome (NS-DATA), a follow-up survey of families who participated in the 2011-2012 NSCH.
- Increasing our understanding about tic disorders and their impact on families and communities through collaborating with the University of Rochester and the University of South Florida.

For more information about TS, please visit: http://www.cdc.gov/tourette.

You can also contact CDC at 1-800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) or via http://www.cdc.gov/info.